

By Senator Hill

1-393-06

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to African-American History and
3 Cultural Heritage Month; authorizing the
4 Governor to annually recognize the month of
5 February as "African-American History and
6 Cultural Heritage Month"; providing an
7 effective date.
8
9 WHEREAS, long ago, approximately 12 million
10 African-American men, women, and children were forced to enter
11 ships for lives of slavery in the Western Hemisphere, 10
12 million of whom survived the Middle Passage to arrive in
13 America, and
14 WHEREAS, the Civil War erupted because the ideals upon
15 which this country was founded are in direct conflict with
16 slavery, resulting in the ratification of the 13th Amendment,
17 abolishing slavery in the United States of America, and
18 WHEREAS, the civil rights movement of the 20th century
19 began in an effort to correct the failures of Reconstruction
20 and erase the remnants of slavery still evident in Jim Crow
21 laws, in continued segregation in nearly every aspect of daily
22 life, and in the persistence of second-class citizenship for
23 African Americans, and
24 WHEREAS, as a testament of strength throughout these
25 struggles, African Americans such as Harriet Tubman, Sojourner
26 Truth, Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. DuBois, Booker T.
27 Washington, George Washington Carver, Carter G. Woodson,
28 Malcolm X., Thurgood Marshall, Reverend Dr. Martin Luther
29 King, Jr., Fannie Lou Hamer, Shirley Chisholm, and Barbara
30 Jordan have contributed to the political and social growth of
31 American society, and

1 WHEREAS, through the contributions of African-American
2 musicians and writers such as Louis Armstrong, Count Basie,
3 Duke Ellington, Billie Holiday, Charlie Parker, Ella
4 Fitzgerald, Dizzy Gillespie, Leontyne Price, Marian Anderson,
5 Andre Watts, Phyllis Wheatley, Langston Hughes, James Baldwin,
6 Richard Wright, Alex Haley, Maya Angelou, Alice Walker,
7 Gwendolyn Brooks, and Toni Morrison, the culture of the United
8 States of America has been vitally enriched, and

9 WHEREAS, African-American sports figures, such as Jesse
10 Owens, Arthur Ashe, Muhammad Ali, Robert "Bullet Bob" Hayes, a
11 Florida native who still is the only athlete to earn both an
12 Olympic Gold Medal and an NFL Super Bowl Ring, Tiger Woods,
13 Venus Williams, and Serena Williams, have demonstrated their
14 ability to be role models on and off the field, in and out of
15 the ring, as they stood up for their rights and beliefs, and

16 WHEREAS, the fields of medicine, science, and
17 technology have all been advanced by the contributions of such
18 African-American men and women as Dr. Charles Drew, Dr. Daniel
19 Hale Williams, Garrett Morgan, George Washington Carver, Dr.
20 Mae C. Jemison, and Dr. Benjamin Carson, and

21 WHEREAS, African Americans who are native to Florida,
22 such as Zora Neale Hurston, Charles Kenzie Steele, Sr., Jesse
23 K. McCrary, Jr., Joseph E. Lee, Asa Philip Randolph, and Mary
24 McLeod Bethune, have proudly represented our state as they
25 contributed to the history and culture of the United States of
26 America, and

27 WHEREAS, it is important to celebrate the many
28 achievements of African Americans in an effort to offer each
29 American a broader perspective of our history and an
30 appreciation for the diversity that makes our country strong,
31 and

1 WHEREAS, February is the birth month of both Abraham
2 Lincoln and Frederick Douglass, two of the leaders in the
3 movement to abolish slavery, and has been recognized at the
4 local, state, and national levels as an appropriate month for
5 commemoration of African-American contributions to our society
6 since 1926 when Dr. Carter G. Woodson, historian and founder
7 of the Journal of Negro History, initiated the observance with
8 Negro History Week, NOW, THEREFORE,

9
10 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

11
12 Section 1. African-American History and Cultural
13 Heritage Month.--

14 (1) The month of February of each year is recognized
15 as African-American History and Cultural Heritage Month.

16 (2) The Governor may issue annually a proclamation
17 recognizing the month of February as "African-American History
18 and Cultural Heritage Month" and urging public and private
19 institutions and organizations to recognize and observe this
20 month through appropriate programs, meetings, or celebrations.

21 Section 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a
22 law.

23
24 *****

25 SENATE SUMMARY

26 Recognizes February of each year as African-American
27 History and Cultural Heritage Month.